



## Agency preserves Cotton Mill housing

**By Paul Leighton**

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BEVERLY — A growing affordable-housing agency has preserved low-cost living quarters for four families by acquiring the Cotton Mill Housing Cooperative on Dodge Street.

Harborlight Community Partners has assumed ownership of the two duplex houses that make up the cooperative. The buildings are at 8 and 10 Dodge St., next to the Beverly fire station.

Dale Earl, a founding member of the cooperative, said the acquisition by Harborlight Community Partners ensures the buildings will remain affordable.

"For the long-term stability of it, putting it under Harborlight Community Partners is just perfect," Earl said.

The Cotton Mill Housing Cooperative was created in the mid-1980s by the Second Congregational Church as a way to provide permanent housing for homeless families who were living in motels. The name comes from its location at the site of the country's first cotton mill.

Earl said the cooperative model, in which residents earned a partial ownership stake, was popular at the time in Massachusetts but became difficult to sustain. Harborlight now manages and maintains the buildings and rents the units to the residents.

Bill Noyes, who has lived at the cooperative with his wife and children for 19 years, said the new arrangement will benefit the families who live there.

"People had been having problems paying their carrying (finance) charges. It was kind of going down the tubes," he said. "This takes a lot of pressure off everybody."

The city of Beverly and the North Shore HOME Consortium invested \$150,000 in the project to repair a vacant unit and to support the transfer, according to Harborlight Community Partners.

The acquisition of Cotton Mill is the latest move by Harborlight, a nonprofit based on Cabot Street. Last summer, Harborlight merged with We Care About Homes, which operates six apartment buildings in the city for low-income families. Harborlight also runs the Turtle Creek and Turtle Woods senior housing complexes and Harborlight House Assisted Living.

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